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CANADA'S NEW GOVERNMENT MAKING SIGNIFICANT INVESTMENTS TO IMPROVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS FOR FIRST NATION STUDENTS

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Conne River, NL (July 5, 2007) - The Honourable Loyola Hearn, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, on behalf of The Honourable Jim Prentice, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, was joined today by Saqamaw (Chief) Misel Joe of the Miawpukek First Nation, to announce federal funding of $275,748 toward the construction of an addition to the St. Anne's School of the Miawpukek First Nation, Newfoundland and Labrador.

"Investment in this school expansion will make a measurable difference in the quality of education of Miawpukek students and will help them reach their full academic potential." Minister Hearn stated, "Canada's New Government is committed to improving on-reserve student retention and graduation rates. Ensuring facilities meet existing and future educational requirements will assist in achieving this important goal."

"Our school is the focal point of our community. It signifies connection, connection to our past and how our community came together to take control of our education system. Each year, our school averages about 10 graduates, which is a major accomplishment for a small community such as Conne River," said Saqamaw Joe. "The school represents hope for our young people as they will one day be our leaders. As with many other smaller communities, the school is used for various community activities such as sporting events, public meetings, graduations and the after-school program. The Mi'kmaq Language and Culture Center is greatly needed as it helps teach our kids about who they are. It serves as the link between our past, present and future."

The new addition to the school will house a Mi'kmaq Language and Cultural Center, including a classroom and a library to house important cultural resources such as books, videos, files, maps and charts. It will be used for cultural and language presentations and classes and will provide office space for the Mi'kmaq Language and Cultural Center staff.

Canada's New Government continues to make investments for education facilities across Canada to support projects such as construction, expansion, renovation, repair, and design and planning projects, including operation and maintenance, to improve learning environments.

For further information please contact:

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